

COMAINT



Answer to Equipment Readiness

by Lieutenant Colonel David M. Levitt
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The Army's Command Maintenance Program, COMAINT, is designed to support overall Army command readiness and insure the availability of equipment and materiel. The primary goal of COMAINT is to revitalize the organizational maintenance effort, placing particular emphasis on first echelon maintenance. Its success, at all levels, rests with the commander, the individual who is responsible for the readiness of his outfit. The combination of highly motivated, well-trained soldiers with reliable equipment, ready for use, is the Army goal.

In early 1972, a Department of the Army Board for Command Maintenance was formed to survey the Army's maintenance posture and was given the mission of revitalizing Army maintenance in the field. It was headed by Major General Homer D. Smith, Jr., and included representation from the U.S. Army Materiel Command, the U.S. Continental Army Command, and the U.S. Army Combat Developments Command.

Formation of the board stemmed from several key factors. Mainly, Department of the Army needed to know how and when commanders were evaluating their maintenance programs since the discontinuance of the Command Maintenance Management Inspection Program and implementation of the Maintenance Assistance and Instruction Team (MAIT) Program. They also needed to know whether the MAIT Program was being properly used. Additionally, the board was charged with informing commanders and their staffs of several new maintenance and maintenance-related programs.

The COMAINT Board traveled throughout the Army visiting headquarters, troop units, motor pools, and maintenance activities and conducting seminars. Maintenance programs explained in the seminars were the Maintenance Assistance and Instruction Team (MAIT) Program, AR 750-51; Maintenance Support Positive; Test, Measurement, and Diagnostic Equipment, AR 750-43; Direct Exchange; Sample Data Collection—The Army Maintenance Management System (TAMMS), AR 750-37; and Basic Issue Items (BII), DA Circular 310-38.

To stimulate interest, the high cost of maintenance was covered. It was estimated that the annual cost of maintenance for Army materiel is approximately \$4½ billion. It was also brought out that the maintenance manpower involved is approximately 10 percent of the total strength in a given force in the field. Of that figure, over 50 percent of the personnel perform at the second echelon level of organizational maintenance. These figures do not include the essential first echelon, or preventive maintenance effort, which must be performed by operators and crews.

Concurrently, the commands presented their ideas and recommendations to the board. The board solicited the command viewpoint on the desirability and utility of equipment serviceability criteria, command efforts toward maintenance evaluation programs, and programs for use of maintenance assistance and instruction teams.

The board published a report containing its findings and recommendations concerning the status of maintenance in today's Army. These findings revealed several significant facts. The report noted a serious lack of maintenance consciousness throughout the Army and a need for improved training in the proper care and operation of Army equipment. It stressed the need for more emphasis on maintenance management—particularly organizational maintenance, to include operator/crew (first echelon) maintenance.

The recommendations were staffed at the Department of the Army, and as a result, the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics was assigned overall responsibility for the COMAINT Program.

Specific actions directed to be taken included—

- Initiation of a program to place additional emphasis on improvement and modernization of Army technical information.
- Development and publication of a recommended standard technique for commanders to use in maintenance evaluation.
- Examination of published maintenance standards to eliminate nonessential differences, and concurrent development of a commander's guide of maintenance criteria and standards for use in maintenance and maintenance management evaluations.
- Increased emphasis on the Army Test, Measurement, and Diagnostic Equipment Program.
- Review of the use of maintenance assistance and instruction teams to determine compliance with AR 750-51.
- Determination of the adequacy of maintenance and maintenance-related instruction. The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel was designated to review basic and advanced career courses, including those designed for noncommissioned officers, and selected technical service school programs of instruction.
- Review of Army training programs and Army training tests. The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations was assigned this task to insure that the need for proper and timely materiel maintenance and the encompassing maintenance mission of all units are adequately stressed and tested. Additional emphasis will be provided to maintenance in mission training where it is now inadequate.

The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics



No substitute for operator's interest in his vehicle.



A minor adjustment may prevent trouble.

has established a Command Maintenance Branch within the Directorate of Supply and Maintenance, with a major responsibility of conducting the COMAINT Program. The branch is also responsible for a number of ongoing and related functions regarding maintenance operations of the Army in the field.

Increased emphasis is being focused on the area of Army technical publications. The Army Materiel Command's Equipment Publications Program is conducted by the U.S. Army Maintenance Management Center, Lexington-Blue Grass Army Depot. To underscore the need for improved and modern technical information, a research and development contract was let in fiscal year 1973 to develop a new approach toward simplified Army technical publications. This effort is in consonance with COMAINT. Increased use of graphic and pictorial displays is mandatory, and the techniques for performing maintenance must be sequential in both format and content.

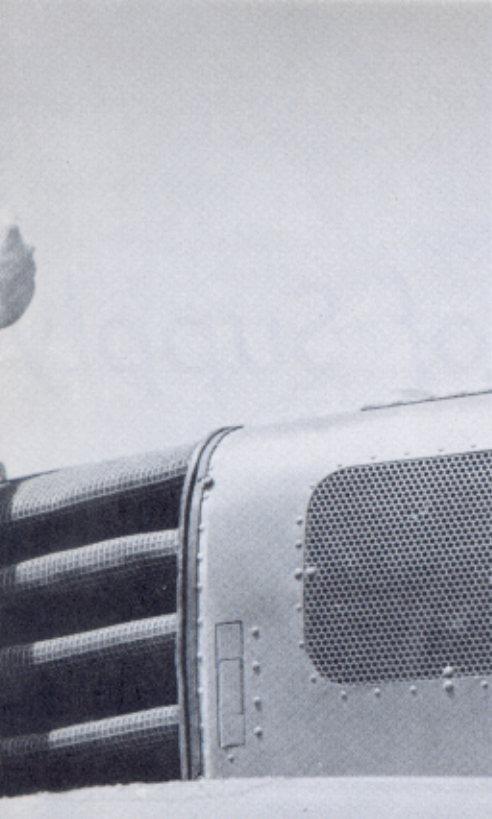
Concurrently, a concerted effort is underway to cut down on the number of publications a unit is required to have. AR 750-1, Army Materiel Maintenance Concepts and Policies, dated 1 May 1972, superseded 13 separate AR's and revised and consolidated all basic materiel maintenance policy into a single directive. Operator's manuals for selected items of equipment are now pocket size and in an easy-to-read format. Two such examples are TM 9-1005-224-10, M60 Machine Gun, dated October 1970, and TM 9-1005-249-10,

M16A1 Rifle, dated May 1972.

A concentrated program is now in progress to communicate COMAINT information to the field. COMAINT bulletins are issued on timely maintenance topics that impact upon the Army in the field. *Army Logistician* and *PS* magazines are producing articles that point the way toward improved maintenance and maintenance management. A series of monthly preventive maintenance posters is being distributed to assist commanders in their maintenance programs as well as to assist operators and organizational mechanics. All of these actions are designed to emphasize and direct attention to maintenance at the organizational level.

The costs and efforts of Army maintenance can be reduced or amplified by the effectiveness of the maintenance program at the organizational level. The overall responsibility for equipment maintenance, like other responsibilities within an organization, must rest with the commander.

To insure the effectiveness of his preventive maintenance program, a commander should comply with guidance and procedures regarding preventive maintenance operations and should initiate and execute a sound and workable preventive maintenance program. One phase of this program should provide training for subordinates in the preventive maintenance of equipment. This phase should also provide for proper training of the operator/crew to prevent the



First echelon maintenance solves this problem.

abuse of equipment and materiel. A commander should allocate sufficient time for the performance of preventive maintenance and frequent inspection of equipment, employing as a guide DA Pamphlet 750-1 or 750-18.

DA Pamphlet 750-18, Commander's Maintenance Guide, provides basic guidance to commanders at all levels for evaluating and determining the status of equipment maintenance and maintenance-related management procedures. The pamphlet provides a list of deviations from standard on selected items of equipment and a number of checklists and listings of reference manuals that can be used in establishing or reviewing a unit's maintenance management program.

A review of the use of maintenance assistance and instruction teams in the continental United States was conducted in early 1973. The review determined that the MAIT program was gaining in receptivity at unit levels as units and their commanders realized the benefits of materiel assistance and instructional visits. There are still some instances of MAIT visits being used or interpreted as inspections; however, the incidence is declining throughout the various commands. The criteria for selection of MAIT personnel continue to be of prime importance—technical competence combined with a sincere desire to assist the individual operator and maintenance mechanic is essential.

Many of the areas of concern within the COMAINT Program continue to undergo examination and evalua-

tion in a number of ongoing and related programs. The Standard Army Maintenance System, Direct Exchange, The Standard Army Intermediate Logistics System, and Maintenance Support Positive are programs that will impact upon maintenance and maintenance management procedures throughout the Army in the field. The doctrine for the future must, of necessity, include the constraints that are imposed upon the Army of today—manpower and financial limitations. These constraints will require that the availability of the Army's materiel be improved within declining resources. There are many things that the logistician can do to assist the commander in attaining and sustaining high equipment readiness standards, but ultimately it is the commander and the chain of command down to the individual crewman or operator that make the command maintenance program work and thereby produce ready materiel. The care and expertise with which the operator operates his equipment, together with the supervision and training provided by his leaders, are as always, the foundation of our maintenance structure. **ALOG**

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